

COMMUNION

"Make Believe?"

Text: Hebrews 9:22, "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

1973

In the April issue of AD magazine there was an article entitled ~~the~~ "The A, B, C's of Salvation", which was written by the Rev. Frederick Buechner, a Presbyterian minister. The article spelled out the different things about the Christianity using each letter of the alphabet for ~~many of the things~~ first letter of the doctrine or symbol used. For instance F was for faith, and ~~was for the Lord's Supper~~ L was for the Lord's Supper. Much of what he wrote I cannot agree with and in particular what he wrote of the Lord's Supper, is completely unacceptable to anyone I firmly believe. I must say in fairness to him that some of the things he wrote were right on and in line with what we should believe, and these points I can accept. But let me share with you what he wrote about the Lord's Supper.

(Quote his interpretation)

— After I read this I asked myself the question, "How can anyone, especially one who calls himself a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ, serving Him in the ministry of a church, believe this, or worse yet, put it down ~~for others~~ to help others to believe this way?" But shortly after reading this article, I received a letter from a friend of mine who is serving a three point charge in Edinburg, Virginia, that led me to believe that there are many Christians who are misinformed, or believe wrongly about what the Lord's Supper is. This friend wrote that at one of the Consistory meetings, the President of the Consistory made the remark, "Why we all know that Jesus was just giving God thanks for the food on the table, and having been allowed to be with such a wonderful gropp for three years."

Now if this is what communion^{really} means, then I believe we are celebrating it in the wrong manner. If this is all it is, or if it is "Make Believe" as Mr Buechner would have us believe, then I suggest we send some of the ladies downstairs to put on a pot of coffee, and get some rolls or doughnuts, and Let's just sit around and drink coffee and eat rolls, and talk about inane

little things this morning.

But Communion is not either of these things I have quoted, and if any of us here this morning believe Communion to be this, then let me educate you as to what the Lord's Supper really is.

First, it was ~~instituted~~ instituted by Jesus Christ with His disciples to prepare them for His sacrifice. He did not explain everything to them in detail, but they got the point after He was taken out and killed. At the meal, "He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, 'Take and eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.' In like manner he took the cup after they had supped, and He gave it to them and said, 'Take and drink, this cup is the New Testament of my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" Now please note, that Jesus was saying His body, and His blood were to be compared with the bread and wine. He set these two elements aside to be eaten and drunk as a symbol of Him and what He was about to do. He did not say that this Communion was "Make Believe" or that whenever it was observed ~~the bread and the wine were actually His body and blood~~ the bread and the wine were actually His body and blood, but that they only represented His body and Blood. And this plump person who does not ~~smell~~ smell of Aqua Velva, (because I do not use it), would never under any circumstances want you to make believe that I am Jesus Christ. This is an insult to Jesus Christ to ever believe that a human being ~~is~~ could ever stand in His place, and besides that it is blasphemy.

Secondly, He said that the broken body, and the shed blood had the significance of being broken and shed for a specific purpose. And that purpose was, in His words, "For the remission of sins." In other words, He was giving His body and His blood, so that mankind could be forgiven of their sins. The author of Hebrews pointed out in our Scripture for this morning, (read the t t). What he was saying was that according to the old Hebrew Law, a sacrifice had to be made for the forgiveness of sins. In the case of offering up an animal it required that the animal had to give up its life, and the life of anything whether it be man or animal is the blood. It was the blood as they

considered it that kept life going and naturally when the blood was shed, life has been given up. Thus in the case of Jesus, He gave up His blood on Calvary and the sacrifice had been made. So with the shedding of His blood, there was now forgiveness of sins through Him,

Now, although He gave His body and His blood for the forgiveness of sins, and the price has been paid once and for all, the significance of this sacrifice is that in our lives we commit sins daily. So on certain occasions we meet together and we partake of the Lord's Supper, and it is at this time that we eat the bread and drink the cup, and as we eat and drink, we ask God to forgive us for the sins we have committed. But as someone was telling me just this past week, ~~we~~ and I also heard one of my favorite radio preachers say it, we should not dwell on our past sins. We must come to Jesus accepting that He died for us, and this death when ^{we} ~~I~~ acknowledge Him, cleanses us from all our past sins. So when we hash and rehash all of the ~~things~~ sins of the past, we negate the sacrifice of Jesus. John tells us, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus, come to Him and have your sins blotted out, washed away, and remembered against you no more. Come to His table and partake of the heavenly food prepared for you, and walk away from His table cleansed and made whole again.

This is the purpose of the Lord's Supper. For anyone to say we meet together to share our humanness, or to make believe that we are swallowing Jesus' life into our own, or to say that it is only a meal of fellowship and fun, is sheer nonsense.

We gather about the Lord's Table to come to God in humility and in penitence, to ask Him to ^{forgive us} ~~cleanse us~~ for our sins which we have committed since last we came to Him seeking forgiveness. We meet as common sinners. I am on the same level as you, and am just as great a sinner as any of you, and by the same token ~~there~~ none of you are any better than me or anyone else. We are common sinners who need this bread and this cup to cleanse us and make us whole again, and this we do "In remembrance of Him."

Jesus blood was shed for us, His body was broken for us. There could be

"Make Believe?"

Text: Hebrews 9:22

Scripture: Hebrews 9:

(Illus kids wrong Beliefs) Fine 4 kids, but we shud
live right: Wspec things of church

(Illus Duechner, Presby, AB April 73, 'A, B, C, Calv)

How can any? espec preach believ this, & preach it?

Examp Al Johnson & pres consist "We all kno Js just
giv thank 4 food & 2B allow 3 with group 3 yrs"

Is this all it is, Make believ we celebrate wrong,

" " " ladies make coffee, eat donuts & talk

Commun not this & if U believ let me educate:

1. It institut By Js 2 prep discip 4 His sacrif
after He ded they got point

(Use words institut) He compar blud, body 2 Bred, wine

He set asid as symbol His sacrif,

this plump 1 who no-smell Aqua Velv wud never want

2 3 believ I Js MT. This insult Js & blasphemy

2B 3: He sed bro: bod, shed blud had signif, specif=

4 Remiss sins, other word He giv 4 mankind 2B 4giv

(READ TEXT) & interpret:

Heb law say sacrif B made 4 -4givness sins

2 Offer animal, had 2 giv up lif & lif man/anim blud

Blud keep liv & wen shed lif given up

Js shed blud Calv & sacrif made

2B WITH SHED HIS BLUD THER WAS NO 4giv SINS THRU HIM

Altho He did & price paid 1nce 4 all, signif sacrif
our livs we sin daily

So cum 2 L'S Sup cert occas & seek 4giv 4 sins

heard preachers say, "MUST NO 2 TELL OF PAST SINS"

Must cum 2 Js, accept He die 4 us, & wen we do this we
cleansed & 4givn sinners,

Must no rehash sins past over, over 4 negate Js sacr

in " He 2B 4giv 2 4giv sins & 2 clens unright

this purp 1's Sup & no other, we no swallow Js etc.

We gather 2 ask & 2 4giv sins we commit sinc last tim

" meet as common sinners/I sam as U, no better,

We do this IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIM

Js blud shed 4us, Body brok 4us,

Ther cud B no 4giv if no tak place

This AM we wud B kill anim & sacrif on that altar

2B 4giv, if Js no pay price 4 us

mak no mistak 1's Sup 2B partak by thoz who cum 2 hav
sins 4giv.

It 4 penitent sinners & 4 no other purpose

The sacrifice of Js Xp was not MAKE BELIEV, BUT WAS
MADE 4 BELIEVING.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)



SEP 56







Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.